

## **LIVABLE COMMUNITIES E-NEWS**

**June 8, 2010      VOLUME 9 NUMBER 4**

**Questions or information to share? Contact [livablecommunities@mail.house.gov](mailto:livablecommunities@mail.house.gov)**

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### **BP Oil Spill**

As oil continues to hemorrhage into the Gulf of Mexico, coastal states are facing the gravest environmental catastrophe in our nation's history. This should be a wake-up call that our dependence on oil has consequences. While there is no silver bullet to reducing America's reliance on fossil fuels, one thing we know is that improving community livability can reduce energy use and improve people's quality of life. With transportation accounting for one-third of America's carbon emissions and almost three-quarters of U.S. oil consumption, the Livable Communities Task Force is working to [advance policies](#) that help communities provide transportation choices. Reducing gasoline consumption by promoting sustainable development will help reduce our dependence on oil from the Gulf Coast to the Persian Gulf.

### **Streetcars**

One real way people can reduce oil consumption is by taking public transit. America is witnessing a streetcar revolution, and the nation's capital is at the helm. Mayor Adrian Fenty joined Congressman Blumenauer in May to [unveil Washington, DC's new streetcar](#), which would extend for 37 miles and is expected to be completed by 2030. Investing in streetcars is an investment in the local economy – spurring business growth along the streetcar line, reducing the time people are stuck in cars to get to work, and creating work for people who help

build these impressive systems.

### **Meeting with EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson**

In May, members of the Livable Communities Task Force met with the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson for a conversation about how the Federal Government can be a better partner to local community livability efforts. Administrator Jackson discussed EPA's role in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and how the administration can work with LCTF to advance legislation that improves the livability of America's communities.



**From left to right: Reps. Tonko and Capps, Administrator Jackson, Reps. Schwartz, Blumenauer and Farr**

## Highlighting Livability Initiatives around the Country

Last month, Livable Communities Task Force Members held events in their districts to highlight transportation, housing, and smart growth initiatives that will improve quality of life for their constituents.

- On May 17<sup>th</sup>, LCTF Chairman Earl Blumenauer visited the Pennsylvania district of LCTF member Allyson Schwartz for a [livability tour](#). The members of Congress met with local officials engaged in green infrastructure initiatives, talked with Philadelphia Mayor Nutter about his Green Works program, visited with community members to discuss livability in small communities, and learned about bike infrastructure efforts. They also sponsored a [livable communities forum](#) at the Academy of Natural Sciences that brought together stakeholders from the public and private sectors to discuss how Philadelphia can become livable city.

- On May 13<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup>, nearly two hundred Memphians attended a conference co-hosted by LCTF member Steve Cohen and the University of Memphis to learn how the mid-South can develop a transportation system that will improve quality of life for all citizens, create green jobs, and foster economic development. The conference featured world-renowned speakers from across the nation including Aaron Woolf, producer of ***Beyond the Motor City***, Marianne Fowler from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Leslie Blakey from the Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors, Scott Bernstein from the Center for Neighborhood Technology, and Lea Schuster from Transportation for America.

## Bike to Work Day

A majority of trips Americans make are less than two miles, and can often be done by foot or on a bike. By investing in pedestrian paths, bike lanes and other infrastructure, we can reduce oil consumption and traffic congestion while improving public health. On this year's Bike to Work

Day (May 21), people across the nation commuted by bike, and here in Washington Reps. Earl Blumenauer and Sam Farr joined Mayor Adrian Fenty and Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff in riding along the new Pennsylvania Avenue bike lane. LCTF members also [sent a letter](#) to Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood thanking him for recognizing biking and walking as important components of our transit system that deserve dedicated funding.

## **Learn More**

We appreciate your interest in LCTF's work, and we will keep you informed of happenings both on and off Capitol Hill. For more information, feel free to visit [the LCTF website](#) .

Regards,

*Earl Blumenauer and Members of the Livable Community Task Force*